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A New Nesting Record for the Jabiru in Costa Rica

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Abstract.—I document the first nesting record of the Jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*) in “Los Guatuzos” forest floodplain, Alajuela province, Costa Rica. The active nest was located in March 1995 at 10°49'23.70"N and 84°47'23.20"W. The nest was 16 m high in a 23 m high silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) and contained three chicks. The zone is not protected and active lumbering is underway. Received 19 November 1996, accepted 5 June 1998.

Resumen.— Documento el primer registro de anidación del Jabirú (*Jabiru mycteria*) para la Llanura de Los Guatuzos, provincia de Alajuela, Costa Rica. La presencia del nido la obtuve en marzo de 1995 mediante informantes claves. El nido activo estaba localizado a 10°49'23,70"N y 84°47'23,20"O, colocado a 16 m de alto sobre una ceiba (*Ceiba pentandra*) de 23 m de altura. El nido estaba ocupado por 3 pichones. La zona donde se encuentra el nido no está protegida y tienes grandes presiones de extracción de madera.

Key Words.—Costa Rica, *Jabiru mycteria*, Jabiru, nesting site.

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The Jabiru (*Jabiru mycteria*) occurs from southeastern México to northwestern Costa Rica and from central Colombia and Venezuela to northern Argentina (Blake 1977; Knoder *et al.* 1980; Hilty and Brown 1986; Sibley and Monroe 1990; Stiles and Skutch 1991). This species is threatened only in the northern region of its range (southern Mexico to northwestern Costa Rica; Johnson *et al.* 1987).

Within this northern region, Jabiru nesting sites have been recorded at Usumacinta Delta, Mexico; Guatemala; Belize (Hancock *et al.* 1992); La Mosquitia, Honduras, the Nicaraguan Miskito Coast (Frederick *et al.* 1997); and the Tempisque Basin, northwestern Costa Rica (Villarreal 1997). Slud (1964) and Stiles and Skutch (1991) stated that the Tempisque Basin of Guanacaste province is the only Costa Rican breeding area of Jabiru. To date, there have been no recorded nesting sites outside of the Tempisque Basin.

In 1995, I studied the Jabiru's population ecology in the Tempisque basin. During this year, I surveyed the basin for active Jabiru nests, using information provided by local residents and biologists working in Costa Rican wetlands with potential as Jabiru habitat.

On 24 March 1995, a local resident told me of an active Jabiru nest in the Río Frío area in the Los Guatuzos plain, Alajuela

province. On 18 April 1995, I visited the area to confirm the presence of the Jabiru nest at 10°49'23.70"N, 84°47'23.20"W, as determined by GPS.

The nest was 16 m above the ground in a thick fork of a 23 m high silk-cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) with a diameter at breast height of 3.70 m. The nest was one m in diameter and contained three chicks approximately one month of age. The vegetation around the nest was dominated by yolillo palm (*Raphia taedigera*) and laurel (*Cordia alliodora*).

This nest is the first Jabiru nesting record in Los Guatuzos plain in northern Costa Rica. Its existence makes the Jabiru a perfect “flagship” species to promote the protection of this forest floodplain. Unfortunately, this nest is on private property outside of the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge. On 7 May 1995, I observed several tractors actively lumbering within 500 m of the nest. Continued monitoring of this nest and systematic searches for others of the species are essential to further conservation efforts.

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